

Preserve WT Subcommittee Minutes
January 15, 2021

Via Zoom: Brue MacNelly, Ivory Littlefield, Heikki Soikkeli, Whit Griswold and Sam Look in attendance.

Reflections on last meeting with Planning Board guests.

Sam: Bea made a comment about the need to make it explicit that maxing out size might limit future subdivision.

Section 4. in Chilmark bylaw may address this. Joan Malkin had suggested possibly deleting this section (which we did) but this may be what is needed to address this issue. We might need to clarify our language about “buildings” since we are potentially different than Chilmark. Divide by number of “habitable” buildings or however we determine.

Ivory: accessory buildings. When you add a bathroom to it when does it become counted? Maybe once you put a shower in it is part of the counted space. This would seem to make it very much able to become living space.

Bruce: Maybe can have a limit on number of buildings that don't count, but only x number can have plumbing.

Heikki: Not sure how pool houses get counted if they have a bathroom, as far as BOH is concerned. They charge you less septic flow, not the same as a bedroom.

Bruce: Is there a limit on numbers of bedrooms per 10,000 sq feet of lot?

Heikki will check with VLS about septic determination

Once a bathroom is in a pool house or studio it can so easily be living space. These should be counted. This was concern of one of the PB members.

We want to keep them from becoming habitable. You put a kitchen in it's a residence. You put a full bathroom in it's a residence.

Is a pool house a studio by definition? Does it depend on what is in it?

As soon as you have a toilet it is a slippery slope. It is so easy to put in your own sink and have an outdoor shower and a hot plate.

Whit: Playing around with sf of certain buildings. For ex: pool house = around 200 sf, studio, barns? What about a limit? You can have up to 3 extra buildings that don't count and they can't be more 2000 sf in aggregate.

Bruce: Like's this suggestion that it is aggregated. People have different needs, they can allocate their allowance as fits their lifestyle. Seems too limiting to put specific caps on each type of building.

Sam: What about just raising the special permit allowance?

Bruce: But then people might put all of that space into one house. Part of our goal is to try and allow for many uses -- home offices, agriculture, etc. And braking up the mass of spaces. So it is better to keep the special permit number as is, and add this extra allowance for accessory buildings.

Heikki: What is in the aggregate then for living space? Answer - accessory Apts. Detached bedrooms.

What about guest houses? In or out?

Sam: What about situations for ex: 6 acres when a guest house can become a full sized dwelling?

Heikki: No, they are not considered a GH once they go over 1000 sf.

Sam: So if we keep GHs out we are only leaving an additional 1000 sf on the table?

Group: Yes

Is there only one GH allowed per lot regardless of acreage? Need to confirm this.

Could a 9 acre lot support two houses and two GHs without division? Can subordinate dwellings have GHs?

Ivory: What about leaving GH in, but accessory apartments out to encourage affordable housing and it is smaller and well defined in town bylaws.

Whit: Also thinks its great to encourage. Affordable option, allows for multigenerational use, etc. Keep them out of the count.

Heikki: Makes a motion to exclude accessory apartments from the aggregate. All in favor.

Bruce: What about a motion to include GHs in the aggregate.

Whit: Not sure I agree.

Bruce: On 4.5 acres, potentially 4250 by right and accessory apt. and GH and 2000 sf for accessory buildings and special permit allowance.

Sam: Too permissive at this point. Why are we doing this?

Bruce: That is why we are talking about putting GHs back in.

Heikki: What is in the accessory structures? Pool houses, studios, barns, garages, workshops, etc.

Heikki: If you include a shower in the definition of habitable space it should be an inside or an outside shower.

Sam: As a hypothetical, if I want to put more of my built space into accessories, studios, etc. Can I build more than 2000 sf of accessory building if I am willing to take the extra sf out of my 3500 by right size?

Are we saying 3 accessory buildings allowed on 3 acres and also the same on 30 acres? Still only 3 accessory buildings? Still only 2000 sf?

Ivory: If we take the accessory apt out the main house could have 3500 plus 800. Answer, yes.

Bruce: do we put a limit on accessory structures? What turns an accessory into habitable space? **Things to consider for next meeting:**

- 1. What is our acreage increase/decrease? 250/acre? 500? Something else?**
- 2. Is a GH in or out?**
- 3. Do we want to take up something about accessory structures? Cap on number or total area?**
- 4. What is the role of the bathroom in making something an accessory structure or habitable space?**
- 5. What about basements? What is the final decision?**

Bruce: If you have legal egress maybe the basement counts.

Heikki: Maybe leave it up to ZBA to look at the plan and decide if they want to count the basement in situations where totally exposed wall and finished inside?

Bruce: If we say everything below grade doesn't count there are going to be grey areas. Let the ZBA decide when it does come up.

Possible language: "Habitable basement space does not count unless determined by the ZBA that the...???"

"If a whole wall is exposed and includes more than 25% glazed openings" it counts.

Plan to consider Bruce's 5 questions (above) and meet again next Wednesday/Friday.

Meeting Adjourned 7:15 pm

Minutes approved January 23, 2021